

OTTAWA & HULL

A SHORT HISTORY

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SONGS OF THE OTTAWA

Ye Maidens of Ontario

Ye maidens of Ontario, give ear to what I write,
In driving down these rapid streams where raftsmen
take delight,
In driving down these rapid streams as jolly
raftsmen do,
While your lowland loafing farmer boys can stay at
home with you.

These lowland loafing farmer boys, they tell the
girls great tales
Of all the dangers they go through in crossing o'er
their fields.
The cutting of the grass so green is all that they
can do.
While we poor jolly raftsmen are running the Long Soo.

Before I'd been in Quebec long - in weeks 'twas
scarcely three,
The landlord's lovely daughter did fall in love with me.
She told me that she loved me, and she took me by
the hand,
And shyly told her mother that she loved a shantyman.

"O daughter, dearest daughter, you grieve my heart
full sore,
To fall in love with a shantyman you never saw before."
"Well, mother, I don't care for that, so do the best
you can,
For I'm bound to go to Ottawa with my roving shantyman.

Les Raftsmen

Là ousqu'y sont, tous les raftsmen?
Là ousqu'y sont, tous les raftsmen?
Dans les chanquiers i'sont montés

REFRAIN

Bing sur la ring! Bang sur la ring!
Laissez passer les raftsmen,
Bing sur la ring! Bing, bang!

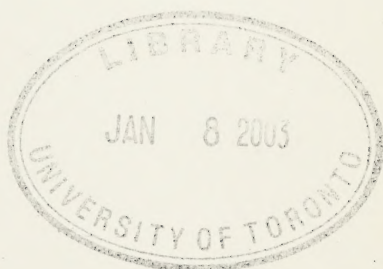
Et par Bytown y sont passés,)2
Avec leurs provisions achetées.

Que l'Outaouais fut étonné,)2
Tant faisait d'bruit leur hach' trempée.

From Folk Songs of Canada by Edith Fulton
Fowke and Richard Johnston. Reproduced
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Minister of Public Works**

OTTAWA

Canada's capital is built where the Ottawa River tumbles over the Chaudière* Falls and, a short distance downstream, the Gatineau and Rideau** Rivers flow in from the north and south. Here Champlain paused and portaged on his way westward in 1613. The priests, soldiers and traders who followed him travelled past these cliffs. Here a war party of Iroquois went by in 1660 on their way to meet Dollard at the Long Sault in a fateful encounter. By this place passed most of the great overland explorers. Champlain called the Ottawa "la grande rivière des Algonnequins" and early English traders called it the Grand River. "Ottawa" is the anglicised form of Outaouac or Outaouais, the name of an Indian tribe from Lake Huron who were prominent in trade with the French in the seventeenth century. They carried their furs by the river that now bears their name.

Philemon Wright, seeing the value of the magnificent stands of white and red pine in the valley and the good agricultural land there, started the first settlement in this region in 1800 on the north or Quebec shore. But his story belongs to that of Hull. On the south side of the river settlement began in 1809, when Ira Honeywell settled on the Ottawa between the Chaudière and Lake Deschênes. Shortly afterward Braddish Billings cut out a farm on the Rideau River (present-day Billings Bridge). A few other settlers moved in near both Billings and Honeywell.***Somewhat later a store was established below the Chaudière on a point, named Bellow's Landing after the store-owner.

After 1815, British veterans of the Napoleonic Wars and the war against the United States came up the Ottawa to get land. In 1818 officers and men of the disbanded 99th and 100th Regiments of Foot, two units that had fought in Canada during the War of 1812,

* Chaudière, or boiling pot, is the French translation of the Indian name "Asticou".

** Rideau, or curtain, is the French name, given because of the appearance of the falls where the river tumbles into the Ottawa.

***The Billings house of 1829 is that fine white structure on the heights at Billings Bridge. The Thompson house of 1830 is at 529 Richmond Road.

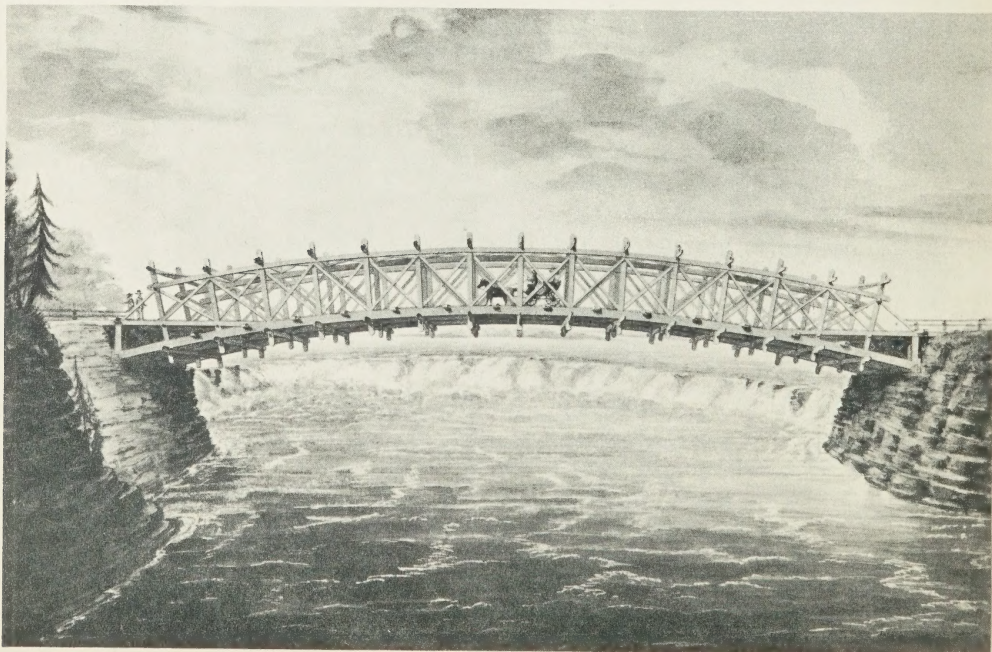
arrived in the autumn with their families to take up grants in the Military Settlement in Goulbourn Township. They cut a road from Bellow's Landing, renamed Richmond Landing, to the new village (called Richmond) on the Goodwood (Jock) River. A few months before this large group arrived, three Scottish families passed this way enroute to settle in Beckwith Township, now the Country of Lanark, at a place that came to be called "The Derry".

Civilians and former soldiers settled in March Township about this time. Here, along the shore of Lake Deschênes the more well-to-do among them erected fine homes, one or two of which stand today; the ruins of several others, mute memorials of a luxury ordinarily undreamed of on the frontier, suggest the gentlemanly way of life of the English countryside.* The pioneers erected three Anglican churches, two of which still stand, at Huntley and at South March.** In 1819

* Henry Wentworth Monk, the son of Captain John Benning Monk of March, went to school in England, became an associate of Holman Hunt, famous painter of the Pre-Raphaelite School. Hunt's portrait of Monk hangs in the National Gallery in Ottawa.

** The third is a picturesque ruin by the river shore near the north end of March township.

The Chaudière bridge, 1827, by Lt. Col. John By



the Duke of Richmond, Governor-in-Chief of British North America, came overland from Kingston via Perth to see the military settlers and died tragically of rabies in a hut near the village named after him.

Meanwhile, about the Rideau River and the Chaudière Falls, Billings, Honeywell and their neighbours cut out small clearings; but, except for a farm owned by Nicholas Sparks and a small clearing at the Rideau mouth, the central area of the future capital remained forest, beaver-meadow and swamp. Sparks' property comprised the very middle of modern Ottawa, from Bronson Avenue to Waller Street, extending southward from Wellington Street to Laurier Avenue. He generously donated land for two churches and for a market hall (the latter, near Elgin Street at Slater became the City Hall).

During the War of 1812 communications by the St. Lawrence River, the main route to the settled area in Upper Canada, had been under American attack. For the future a safer water route between Montreal and the Great Lakes was urgently needed. Ten years were spent in sporadic investigation and consideration of a route by the Rideau and Cataraqui River systems and finally in 1826 Lieutenant-Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers was sent to the Chaudière to construct a canal from that point to Kingston. Where Ottawa is today, the Earl of Dalhousie, who had succeeded the Duke of Richmond, had wisely secured commanding ground for the Crown in 1823, and adjacent to this By laid out two settlements called Upper and Lower Town, separated by part of the Government lands called Barrack Hill (the present Parliament Hill). Work on the canal began the next year.* Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1826, enterprising men from Richmond and March had come in to get land and start houses, and new settlers came up the river. Irish labourers, who had emigrated to Canada, victims of over-population in their own land, lived in a conglomeration of cabins and dugouts west of the canal called "Corkstown".

Upper and Lower Town jointly received the name "Bytown" after the canal engineer, early in 1827. The canal was opened in 1832 and the town began to grow. Stores, manufactories** and banks were set up, churches and schools were built and a little manufacturing community was started in New Edinburgh about the Rideau Falls. Steamboats plied the river and canal, and a newspaper, the Bytown Gazette, was started in 1836. In this year, too, George Buchanan built a timber

* The Commissariat Building beside the canal locks below Parliament Hill was built in 1827. Today it is the Bytown Museum.

** Stoves and axes were among the articles made.

slide to by-pass the Chaudière Falls, replacing a narrower slide that By had built on his arrival. Shortly after Buchanan's Slide was opened, Sir Francis Bond Head, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, the first of a long series of illustrious visitors to the Ottawa to have the experience, was given an exhilarating ride down this chute on a timber-crib.

Perth, a military settlement like Richmond, was for some time the administrative centre of the old District of Bathurst in which Bytown was situated, but in 1842 the District of Dalhousie was set up, with Bytown as its district town. A court house and jail were built. Most of the French-speaking and English-speaking townspeople lived in relative peace, though the "Shiners", Irish raftsmen, were rough and rowdy. The rebellions of 1837 had left Bytown relatively unruffled, but the troubles of 1849, following the passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill,* produced a riot called "Stony Monday". After a wild outburst, the Tory forces rallied with arms on Barrack Hill and the Reformers, also armed, assembled in Lower Town, but troops of the garrison stood firm on Sappers' Bridge over the canal between them until the rioters dispersed.

The telegraph came up from Montreal in 1850, a sign of progress. Though its streets, depending on the weather, were either muddy or dusty, Bytown could now boast of some fine stone buildings, particularly on Sussex** and Wellington Streets. A change was coming about in the timber industry, long sustained by the British demand for squared white pine logs, for the British system of preferential import duties had been abandoned. In the United States the accessible forest stands of the east were depleted and sawn lumber was needed to house a growing population. Also the American railway and canal network by now extended to the Canadian border, making transportation easy. Encouraged by these favourable conditions, beginning in 1853, a group of American lumbermen came to Bytown and established sawmills at the Chaudière. Soon the islands about the falls and the flats on the both shores were covered with lumber piles, and loaded barges were on their way to the American market.

* The Rebellion Losses Bill reimbursed those who had suffered loss or damage to property in the Rebellion of 1837-38. The Tories considered that the Bill aided disloyal people.

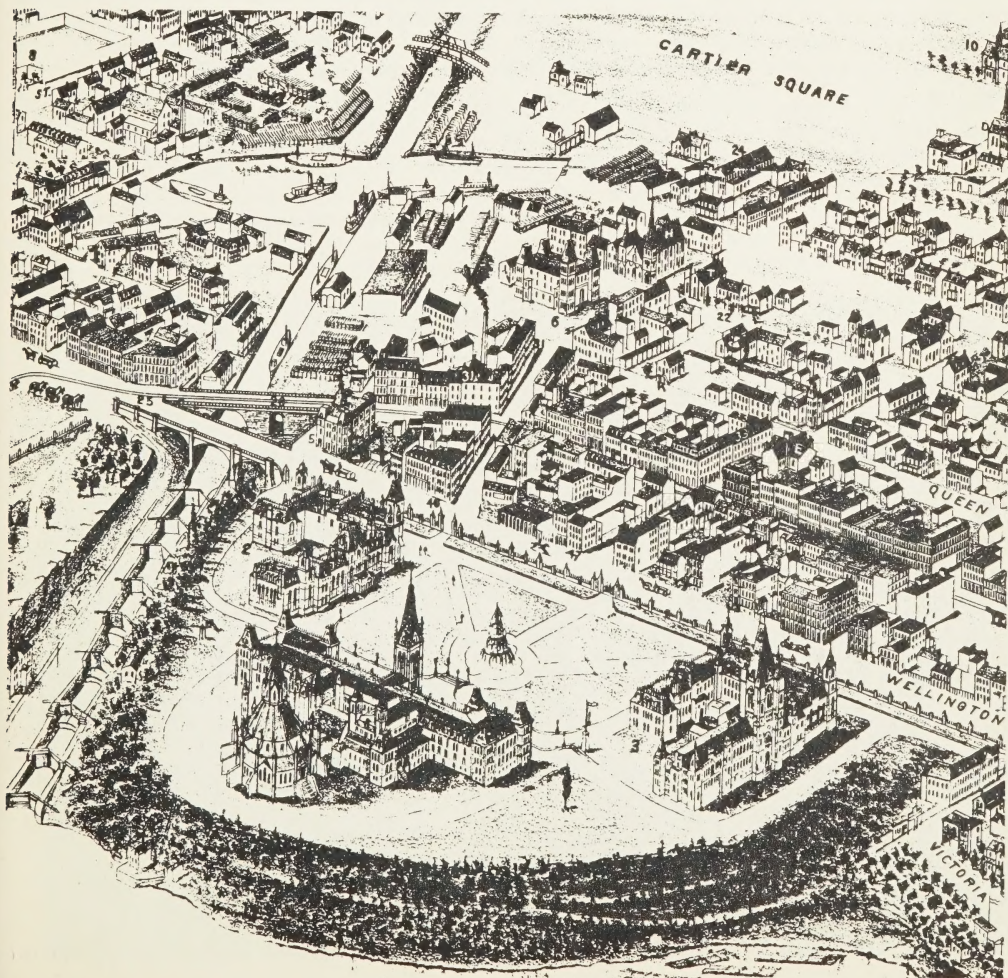
** Académie de-La-Salle, the Basilica, the stone buildings at Sussex and Murray and Sussex and George, are early structures, though most have been modified.

In December, 1854 the Bytown and Prescott Railway* reached New Edinburgh and next spring a bridge took the tracks over the Rideau to a station near Sussex Street. The town was becoming an industrial centre. Gasworks on King Street, (King Edward Avenue) provided illumination for some buildings and fitfully lit the plank sidewalks on moonless nights.

In 1855 Bytown became a city and took the name Ottawa, just in time to receive a great honour - and to assume a great responsibility. The United Province of Canada, since its formation in 1841, had shuttled its

* At Prescott it met the newly built Grand Trunk Railway that joined Montreal and Toronto.

The centre of Ottawa, 1876, by H. Brosius

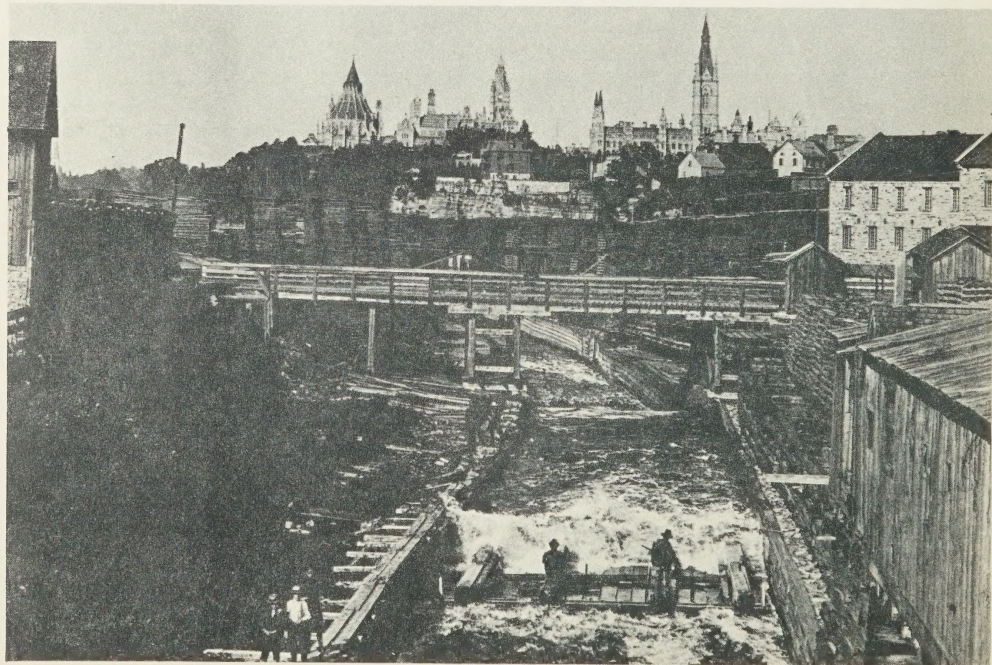


capital between Kingston, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec and was now trying to agree on a permanent site. At the end of 1857 Queen Victoria settled the dispute, choosing Ottawa. Government buildings for the new capital were designed in the Gothic Revival style and contracts were let in 1859. The next year the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, laid the corner-stone of the Parliament Building on Barrack Hill, henceforth to be Parliament Hill. The new railway carried stone from Ohio and New York State for the buildings and took lumber back from Ottawa valley.

Parliament Hill was not crowned with its Gothic structures for some time. The task was hard, the cost much greater than expected. It was not until late 1865 that the government of the Province of Canada moved into the Eastern and Western Departmental Buildings; the legislature occupied the Parliament Building in 1866. Rideau Hall, the house of Thomas MacKay, a former masonry contractor who had built the canal locks up from the Ottawa and set up mills in New Edinburgh, was adapted as a home for the Governor-General.* The next year the first Parliament of the new Dominion of Canada

* The first Governor-General, Viscount Monck, found the Ottawa streets so bad that he journeyed to and from Parliament Hill in a long-boat manned by bluejackets.

A crib of timber in the slide, Ottawa, about 1880



met in the incomplete Centre Block (as we have come to call it); the tower was unfinished and the library was not yet built. In Ontario and Quebec Fenian* raids from the United States had been repulsed in 1866; these Irish troubles had their repercussions in Ottawa. On April 8, 1868 a sombre event shook the new capital: D'Arcy McGee, one of the Fathers of Confederation, who had taken a strong stand against the Fenians, after delivering a speech late at night in the Commons was assassinated outside his lodgings on Sparks Street near O'Connor. A plaque marks the spot.

The nation enjoyed a brief prosperity during most of the next decade. Ottawa grew and the government expanded as the Dominion extended its authority over more and more of British North America. Transportation was needed, so a street railway began to run horse-drawn cars in 1870 from New Edinburgh to the Chaudière. None too soon, Ottawa finally got a water-system in 1874 and a trunk sewer two years later. The first telephone was installed in 1877, in the Prime Minister's office, and the next year the Governor-general experimented with another invention, T.A. Edison's phonograph. "Ladies and Gentlemen" said the Marquis of Dufferin as he spoke into the machine, "I have never had occasion to bottle my speech until now. I propose calling on you to give three cheers for Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, 'Hip! Hip! Hurrah!'. Many fine homes and stores in stone and brick were built; the Departmental Buildings on the Hill were enlarged, the Mackenzie Tower on the West Block being completed in 1878. An old wooden City Hall near the canal was replaced in 1876 by a fine stone building on Elgin Street and a large post office was erected where the War Memorial is today. Parliament Hill and Major's Hill Park were landscaped. The beautification of Ottawa had begun. But sidewalks were still made of plank, the streets were still dusty in dry weather, muddy in wet, and street-cars and fire-reels ran on sleigh-runners in winter. Every now and then one of the great saw-mills would catch fire and go up in a blaze, with columns of billowing smoke and sparks.

This was the age of the railroad. The line that had entered via New Edinburgh in 1855 built a new approach to serve the mills at the Chaudière, and other lines came in from east and west. The first rail bridge over the Ottawa River was completed in 1880, above the Falls. Five years later militiamen from the Capital went west by the nearly-complete Canadian Pacific transcontinental line to fight the rebellious

* The Fenians were Irish veterans of the American Civil War who were violently opposed to Britain.

Métis and Indians in the Saskatchewan country. The city's manufacturing industries grew, making sawmill equipment and providing for the needs of the surrounding area. Government was expanding, too. The Langevin Block on Wellington Street and a building near Nepean Point to house the Public Printing Office were built in this decade.

Electric street lights were introduced in 1885 but the 1890's marked the real beginning of the era of electricity in Ottawa. Thomas Ahearn and Warren Soper took over the horse-cars and established an electric street railway in 1891. By 1893 the street-car system was in full operation and their factory was making trams for other Canadian cities. The city was badly cut up by railway tracks; in 1895 seven lines ran into Ottawa, served by four stations. But the streets were being improved; the laying of pavement began. A move to increase Ottawa's recreation areas was taken in 1893 when the City bought Rockcliffe Park. In 1899 the Ottawa Improvement Commission was set up by the Federal government to start making industrial Ottawa more more beautiful.

April 26, 1900, was a day of horror. A fire started in Hull and, carried by the wind soon destroyed a large segment of the city, flamed across the Chaudière and burned a swath through Ottawa as far as Dows Lake, making thousands homeless. The lumber piles had gone up in showers of sparks and embers; but their destruction did not yet signalize the end of the sawn-lumber industry in Ottawa and Hull.

Rebuilding after the fire was rapid. The Ottawa Improvement Commission, meanwhile, began its work of beautifying the capital to the designs of a Montreal landscape architect, Frederick G. Todd, cleaning up the banks of the canal, starting a driveway along its west side, making a boulevard and planting the elms on King Edward Avenue and taking over on behalf of the City the development of Rockcliffe Park. This first decade of the Twentieth Century saw new wonders, the horseless carriage and heavier-than-air flight; the automobile and the aeroplane arrived in the capital.

In 1912 the Union Station and the Chateau Laurier Hotel, both built by the Grand Trunk Railway Company, were opened. On the night of February 3, 1916, during the height of the First World War, the Parliament Building caught fire and, except for the Library, was completely gutted by morning.* Parliament moved to the newly-built Royal Victoria Museum and reconstruction of the Centre Block began. The cornerstone of the

* The great bell in the tower struck midnight then crashed to the basement. It can be seen behind the Parliamentary Library.

Peace Tower was laid by the Prince of Wales in 1919. The costs of the war, the bankruptcy of two trans-continental railways and the expensive reconstruction of the Parliament Buildings now put a long halt to the beautification of Ottawa.

The new House of Commons was officially opened in 1920, a building designed in the Gothic style, but a rather more severe version than the original. It was not until 1927, however, that the Peace Tower was completed, a memorial to the War dead. Ottawa's Civic Hospital was opened in 1924 and more government office buildings were constructed about this time. In 1927 too, the Ottawa Improvement Commission was reconstituted as the Federal District Commission, and its sphere of interest was extended into the Province of Quebec. Next year the Commission built the Champlain Bridge as a first step towards extending the driveway system north of the Ottawa and in succeeding years it enlarged the parks and driveways. The Government approved the purchase and clearing of the large site that is now Confederation Square, so as to provide a location for the War Memorial, making an open space in the city's centre that allows the Gothic beauty of the buildings on the Hill to be more easily seen. This decade, too, had pretty well seen the end of the sawn lumber industry in Ottawa. Pulp mills, utilizing the small spruce logs that were now the major forest crop, replaced the great sawmills.

The story of how the Federal District Commission, later the National Capital Commission, continued its work of beautification of the capital to the plans of the French town-planner Jacques Gréber is of too recent a date to belong in a history of old Ottawa. It can be found in other publications of the Commission.

Central Ottawa barely notices the great Ottawa River flowing by, hidden under high rocky cliffs. One of the capital's poets, William Wilfred Campbell described the river:

Out of the northern wastes, lands of winter
and death,
Regions of ruin and age, spaces of solitude
lost;

You wash and thunder and sweep,
And dream and sparkle and creep,
Turbulent, luminous, large,
Scion of thunder and frost.

Down past woodland and waste, lone as the
haunting of even,

Of shriveled and wind-moaning night when

Winter hath wizened the world;
Down past hamlet and town,
By marshes, by forests that frown,
Brimming their desolate banks,
Your tides to the ocean are hurled.

The river separates Ontario from Quebec, Much traffic flows back and forth over this interprovincial boundary by the bridges that link the two cities. Here is a short description of those bridges:

BRIDGES OVER THE OTTAWA RIVER
IN THE OTTAWA-HULL AREA

DATE	NAME	LOCATION	NATURE	CONSTRUCTION
1828	Union (This bridge fell in 1836)	Chaudière	Road	Wood Truss
1843	Union Suspension	Chaudière	Road	Cable sus- pension
1889	(Damaged by fire in 1900)	Chaudière	Road	Steel Truss
1919		Chaudière	Road	Steel Truss
1880	Prince of Wales	West of Chaudière	Rail	Steel Truss
1901	Alexandra	Nepean Point	Road & Rail	Steel Canti- lever and Truss
1928	Champlain	Remic Rapids	Road	Plate girder

A new road crossing is now planned, the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge, from Sussex Drive to Parc Jacques Cartier.

For further reading on Ottawa see:

Ross, A.H.D., Ottawa Past and Present, Toronto,
1927.

Brault, Lucien, Ottawa Old and New, Ottawa,
1942

Eggleston, Wilfrid, The Queen's Choice, Ottawa,
1961.

Philemon Wright's mill and tavern at the Chaudière,
1823, by Henry DuVernet



The City of Hull is situated on the north, or Quebec shore of the Ottawa River, extending from the Little Chaudière Rapids to the mouth of the Gatineau.*

The traditional portage paths past the Chaudière were on the north shore; the first crossed the present-day Eddy Co. yards, and at the Little Chaudière Rapids a short distance upstream another carry was necessary. In the Hull suburb of Val-Tétreau, beside the Ottawa in the park, a short walk downriver from the statue of the martyred priest Saint Jean de Brébeuf stands a monument showing the way to this old path up which explorer, missionary, soldier and trader trudged. Champlain, Nicolet, Brébeuf, Jolliet, Marquette, d'Iberville, Mackenzie, Fraser and Simpson have walked here. The crude steps, perhaps two hundred or more years old, where the "pork-eaters"*** of the fur companies packed their heavy trade bundles and birch-bark canots de maître, are still there. Before it carried away the forest wealth of its own valley the Ottawa River floated down many fortunes in furs from the pays d'en haut, but by the end of the eighteenth century

* Named after Nicolas Gatineau, trader and explorer.

**The voyageurs lived on salt pork between Montreal and Fort William.

the twilight of the fur trade by this route was approaching. As the trader went the settler appeared.

In the Spring of 1800 Philemon Wright came up the Ottawa with his family, his settlers and axemen, by sleigh on the ice, and arrived at the mouth of the Gatineau River. They had left Woburn, Massachusetts in February and came prepared to set up, under the leadership of Wright, a self-sufficient community. They established farms and gathered a harvest the first season. The Massachusetts men found the soil rich and the life good; their community prospered.

They had settled in the township of Hull, named after the city in England. Wright quickly built a grist mill and a saw-mill at the Chaudière Falls and in 1804, he added a blacksmith's shop that had four forges with bellows worked by water power. Soon a shoemaker's and a tailor's shop, a bake-house and a tannery were constructed. Part of the water from the Falls was diverted to work the mills and forges by means of a stone wing-dam, part of which still exists.

In 1806, Wright, with his nineteen year old son Tiberius and three other men set off for the port of Quebec on a raft made up of logs and boards cut from the trees on their lands. The trip was rough - it took them two months - but they got there, sold the lumber and arrived back before winter. Now the community was no longer operating on a subsistence basis; it had begun producing for the export market, creating wealth. They didn't depend on middlemen; they transported their own produce all the way to the market, nearly three hundred miles away, a tiresome journey that in later years, with the aid of steam tugs in the quiet river stretches, would only take ten days. That pioneer trip of 1806 was the start of the timber trade that was to be the economic mainstay of the valley for a century to come.

The community prospered. Roads and bridges were made, a school was constructed in 1811 and a chapel in 1815. In the establishment at the falls, known as Wright's Village, the American farmer-capitalist built the Columbia Hotel in 1820, a three-storey building that remained an inn until 1871 and was destroyed by fire six years later. In 1823 a stone structure, St. James Anglican church, was started. It burned in 1867. The Rev. Asa Meech, a Congregational Minister from Massachusetts, was the first clergyman in the settlement. He was followed by the Rev. Amos Ansley of the Church of England who was also active in March and other townships up and down the river.

When Lt. Col. By arrived to build the Rideau Canal he put other works in hand, including the construction of a log channel to by-pass the Chaudière on the Bytown side, for which the firm of P. Wright

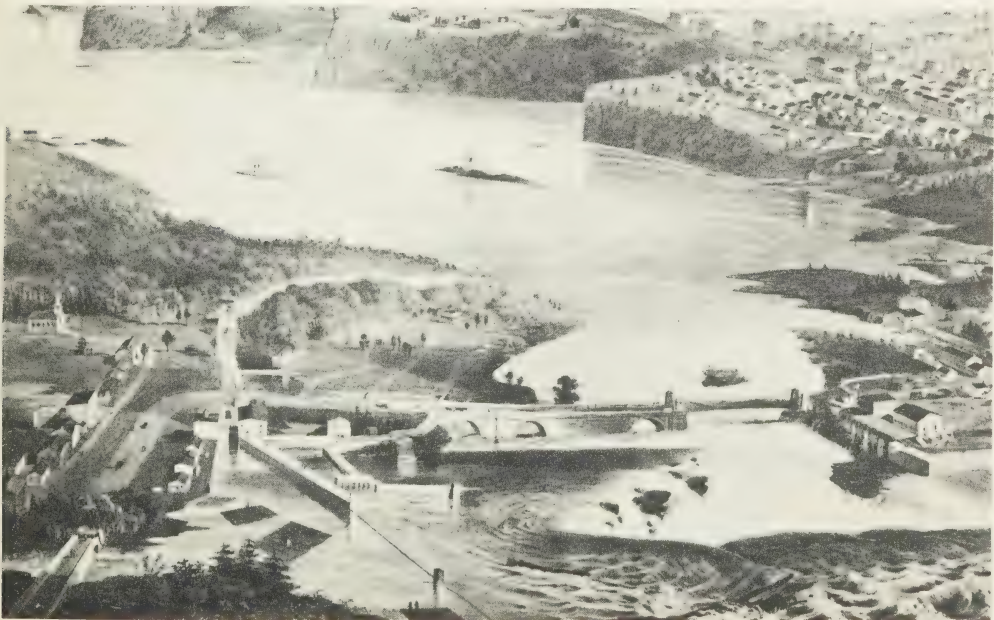
& Sons built the diversion dams. He also had a bridge made over the river, and the Wrights built the approaches.* Colonel By cleverly designed a wood truss bridge to span the wide gap over the turbulent Chaudière. His log channel permitted the descent of individual timbers without the bruising that resulted from passage over the falls.

The Wrights were not satisfied with the improvement; Ruggles, Philemon's son, went to Scandinavia, studied the timber slides there, came back and designed one that would let a complete unit of a raft, called a crib, pass through. He cut his slide in 1829 through the solid rock to join an existing waterway. Part of it can be seen today, just to the south of the E.B. Eddy Co. Office, on your right as you enter Hull from Ottawa.

Regular transportation on the river was organized in 1819 when Philemon Wright instituted a service by the four-ton "Packet", a Durham boat propelled by oars and a sail. In 1822 Thomas Mears built a larger vessel in Hawkesbury and had a steam engine to propel it moved up from Montreal. This boat, the "Union of the Ottawa", commenced service between Hull Landing

* Two original arches of this bridge still support the westerly roadway opposite the Gatineau Power Plant at the Falls.

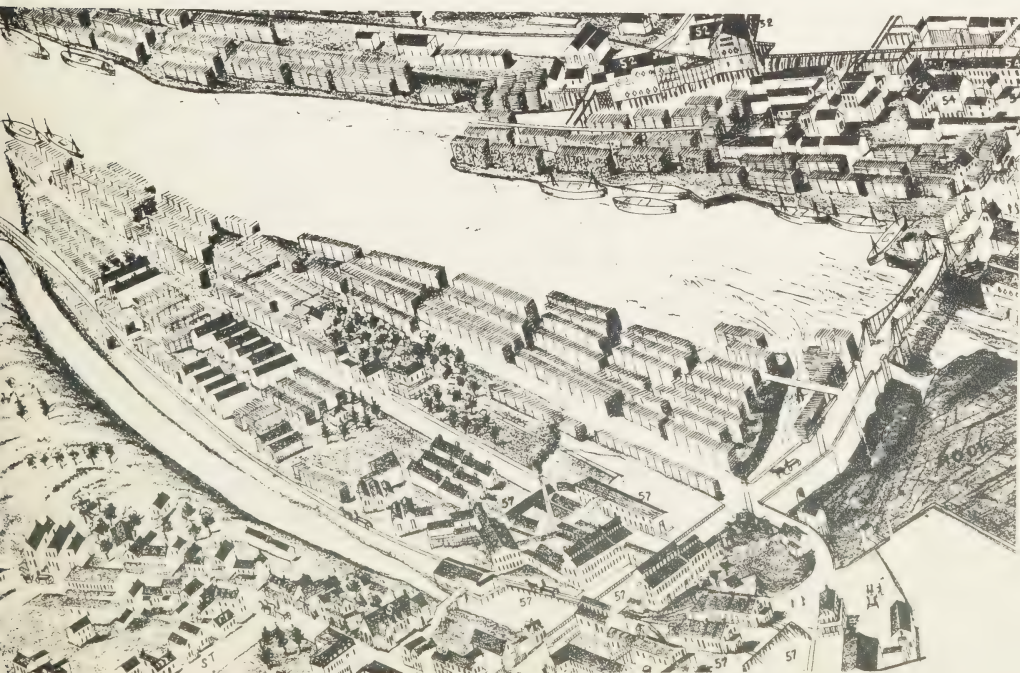
Wright's Town and the Chaudière, 1857, by Stent and Laver



A legendary figure of Hull's early days was the giant raftsmen Jos Montferrand, terror of the Shiners. One story of Jos tells how he kicked down, from below, the ceiling of a house where his enemies were hiding, as the preliminary to a free-for-all.

At the first election in the municipality of Hull Township in 1855, Christopher Brigham became mayor. There were few French Canadians there then; the seven council members all bore Anglo-Saxon or Celtic names. The Town Hall was located at Old Chelsea until 1866, then briefly at New Chelsea until 1870 when it was moved into the settlement at the Chaudière, now called Wrightstown.

In 1851 there had arrived another American, Ezra Butler Eddy, who, like Philemon Wright, was to introduce an era of development in the settlement. On the site of Wright's mills he established first a match factory, then a pail factory and in 1866 he built a great saw-mill. By this time Wrightstown was growing, for the construction of the government buildings in Ottawa had stimulated an influx of workers. Under the Rev. Delisle Reboul, an Oblate priest who had been a missionary among the Ottawa shantymen, a number of ecclesiastical buildings were erected, but these have been destroyed by fire. He was also a leader in pressing for municipal improvements. In 1870 Eddy



bought Philemon Island* from the Wright estate, and built a huge mill there; later he acquired another large property opposite the Parliament Buildings and here, in 1889, began to make sulphite pulp for paper. The Eddy Co. still occupies these sites. Today half a dozen paper-mills use the logs carried down by the rivers that meet near Ottawa, and cook their chemical pulp with the aid of off-peak electric power available at the falls and rapids on those rivers. From Hull eastward to Thurso are grouped the pulp, paper and fibre-board mills of the Ottawa region.

Other large industries beside Eddy's were established in Wrightstown. Wright, Batson and Currier had a huge saw-mill opposite the Parliament Buildings in the 1870's which they sold to E.B. Eddy in 1883. The site of another, the Gilmour (later Gilmour and Hughson) mill, that stood at the east end of today's Parc Jacques Cartier, dating originally from 1873, was marked until recently by a high brick stack. Andrew Leamy's steam mill cut logs near the mouth of the Gatineau from 1854 for about thirty years; it suffered from a series of disastrous boiler explosions.

Wrightstown became a city in 1875 and took the name of Hull. Here is a traveller's none too flattering description two years later, from the Richmond, Que., Guardian:

"Hull is remarkable only for its great lumber mills, factories, water power and muddy streets. It is a busy place, but wholly destitute of any pretensions to architecture or symmetry. One third of its houses are vacant and another third in an obvious condition of chronic rheumatism".

Hull was suffering then, along with the rest of Canada, from the profound economic depression of the late 70s. But small improvements were made. In 1878 the Ottawa Free Press reported that a dozen gasoline vapour streetlights had been installed, noting "Thus will the city emerge from the Egyptian darkness in which it has lain so long". Other services came slowly. It was not until 1886 that a piped water-supply was provided and about this time a sewer system was also constructed. Electric trams began to run in 1896.

The railway was late in coming to Hull. It was not until 1877 that the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway reached the city. Shortly afterward this company bridged the Ottawa above the Chaudière,

* That portion of the mainland adjacent to the Chaudière cut off by the timber slide.

then sold out to the C.P.R. A line called the Pontiac and Pacific Junction Railways was extended up-river, eventually reaching Waltham and another feeder line, the Ottawa and Gatineau, was built up the Gatineau River towards Maniwaki in 1893. These two companies, with financial aid from the municipal government of the capital, were responsible for the construction of the Alexandra Bridge that crosses the Ottawa River from Nepean Point, opened in 1901. In its day this was the greatest bridge in Canada.

Hull has other industries beside the processing of forest products. Since 1851 axes have been made there for the lumbermen; for a hundred years now the Walters Axe Co. has been in business. From quarries and pits partly located on Columbia Farm, partly on other former Wright property, cement has been made in Hull since 1830. Today the Canada Cement Co. marks the site of Canada's Capital from afar with a grey-white plume that streams out in the prevailing westerly wind from its high stack. These busy mills made the cement for all the big hydro-electric power dams upriver.

Hull, predominantly French-speaking and Roman Catholic today, was, because of its beginnings, first largely English-speaking and Protestant. The first Catholic chapel was built in 1846, and a large stone edifice in 1870. The first French-Canadian Councillor in the township was elected in 1868, but in seven short years the picture had changed, so that the municipal council of 1875 counted six of its ten members as French-speaking. The population figures are even more indicative: in 1851 about one-tenth was French-speaking; the proportions were about equal in 1870 and fifty years later only one-tenth was English-speaking. The ratio has continued to diminish.

Hull has suffered from a series of calamitous fires that Ottawa has been mercifully spared from, except for one instance. In 1875, 1880, and 1888, large sections of the city were turned into blackened ruins. The Great Fire of 1900 wiped out half the built-up area. Under such conditions municipal development has suffered. A city hall was burned in 1888 and its replacement was destroyed in 1900. The present City Hall was constructed in 1901. During these destructive years the struggle went on with Aylmer for the possession of the district court house. Hull built an edifice in 1894 in anticipation of victory, which was indeed won three years later. No longer did lawyers have to drive eight miles by carriage along the Aylmer Road to Court: But the holocaust of 1900 carried away the new court house and Hull had to build another.

It was not until 1928 that the Federal District Commission began to secure lands in the province of Quebec to extend its parks and parkways. The story

of the Commission's work is to be found in other publications.

By the Census of 1961 Hull's population was 56,929. This growing city is assuming a more and more important role as a centre of culture and administration, meriting the title "The Metropolis of Western Quebec". From Hull have come men and women prominent in the arts and in the world of sport. In the names of its streets the city perpetuates the great names of French Canada and of France such as Bourget, Cartier, Champlain, Dollard, Frontenac, Jeanne d'Arc, Joffre, Maisonneuve, Nicolet, Papineau, Richelieu, Salaberry and Talon, to mention a few. Hull's citizens, like those of Ottawa, are fortunate in their geographical location on the frontier where two cultures of Canada meet, since they have a fine opportunity to know both.

For further reading on Hull see:

Cinq-Mars, E.E., Hull, son origine, ses progrès son avenir, Hull, 1908.

Brault, Lucien, Hull 1800-1950, Ottawa, 1950

NOTE: Map opposite page 1, together with paintings, drawings and photographs on pages 2, 4, 6, 11, 13 and 14-15 are reproduced by courtesy of Public Archives of Canada. Photograph of Castor Hotel was supplied by M. E. Chevrier. It was taken about 1882. Captions under photographs reproduced on inside of back cover show the dates of construction.

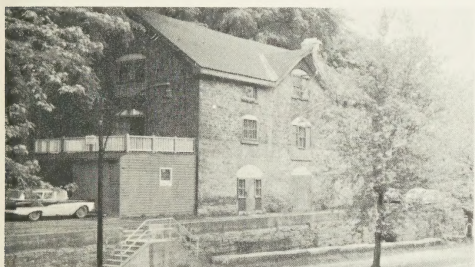
OTTAWA HISTORIC BUILDINGS



"Earncliffe", Dalhousie near Sussex, 1857



Basilica, Sussex and St. Patrick, 1853



Commissariat Building, Rideau Canal, 1827

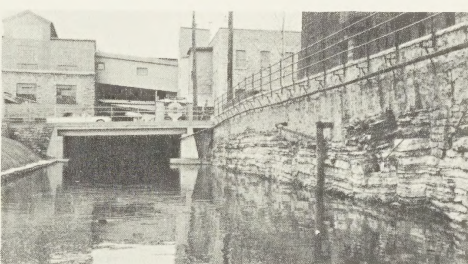


Castor Hotel, 453 Sussex Drive, 1865

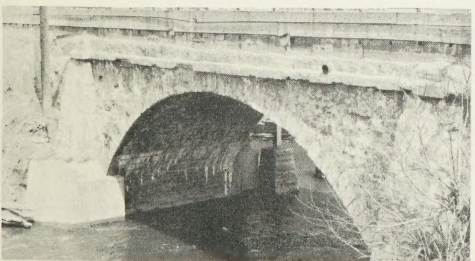
HULL HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES



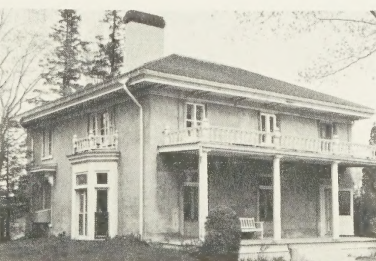
T. Brigham's house, 376 St. Joseph Blvd., 1839



Wright's Timber Slide, Eddy St., 1829

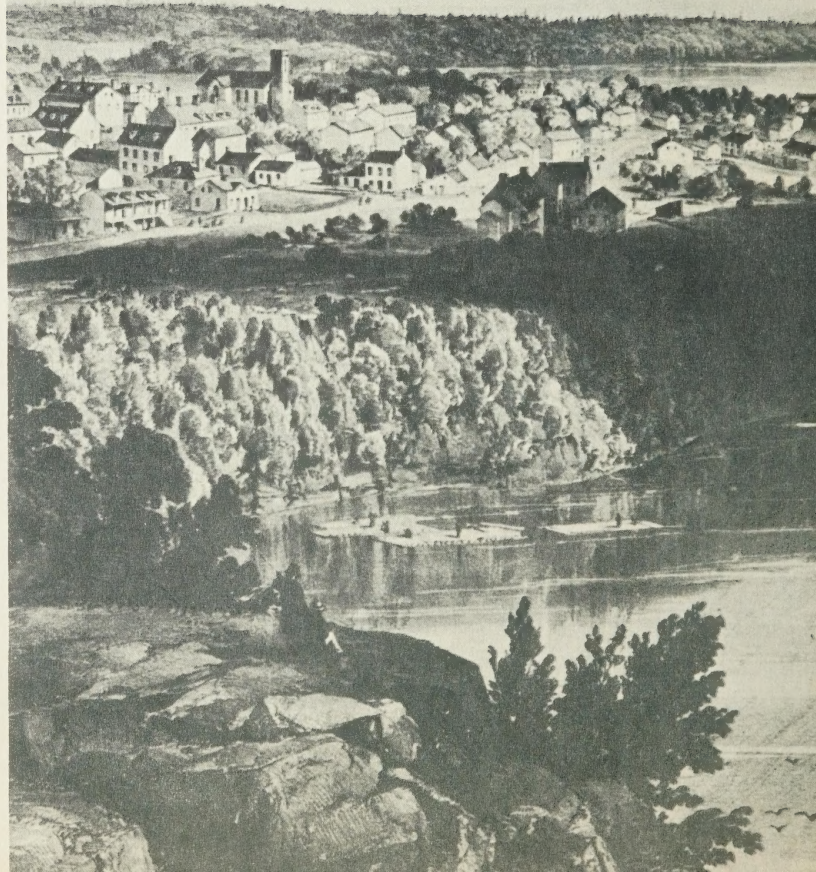


Bridge, Chaudière Falls, 1827



R.W. Scott house, Gamelin Blvd., 1865

"Ottawa City, Canada West, 1855" by E. Whitefield,
Public Archives of Canada



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